



# SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

**February 7, 2007  
Board Meeting Minutes**

**Location:**

Board of Supervisors Chambers  
810 Court Street  
Jackson, CA 95642

**I. Call to Order**

Vice Chair Dahle convened the meeting at 1:08 PM.

**II. Swearing in of New Boardmembers**

New Boardmembers Byng Hunt, Mono County Supervisor representing the Eastern Region, and Robert Weygandt, Placer County Supervisor representing the Central Region, were administered the oath of office.

**III. Roll Call**

Present: Brian Dahle, Carol Whiteside, John Brissenden, Kim Yamaguchi, Louis Boitano, Bob Kirkwood, Robert Weygandt, Byng Hunt, BJ Kirwan, Mike Chrisman, John Lloyd, Byron Sher, Allen Ishida, Mike Tollefson, Mike Chapel (for Beth Pendleton), and Bill Haigh.

Absent: No members were absent.

**IV. Approval of December 6, 2006 Board Meeting Minutes**

Boardmember Yamaguchi asked that the minutes be corrected on Page 5 to indicate his statement was, "Butte County has a population of 215,000, with 42,000 residents in his district."

Boardmember Brissenden indicated that on Page 6, first paragraph, the word "on" should be stricken under Action Plan Update. In addition, under Program and Grant Guideline Development, strike "need" prior to "changes or adjustments" and on page 8, Izzy Martin is the CEO of the Sierra Fund. Boardmember Brissenden requested the record reflect his recusal on the License Plate Issue due to the involvement of The Sierra Fund (Boardmember Brissenden's wife sits on the board at The Sierra Fund). There were no other changes to the minutes.

**Action: Boardmember Boitano moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded a motion to approve the December 6, 2006 Board Meeting Minutes with noted**

APPROVED AT MAY 3, 2007 BOARD MEETING.

changes. The motion passed unanimously. Boardmembers Hunt and Weygandt abstained from voting as new members to the Board.

**V. Public Comment (non-agenda items)**

Paul Stein - Welcomed the Board to Amador County and invited EO Branham and Boardmembers to tour the property at Copperopolis Community Plan in Calaveras County. Mr. Stein noted the new District 5 Supervisor, Russ Thomas, was the Copperopolis Community Plan architect.

Russ Thomas – Supervisor, Calaveras County, stated his desire of adding dedicated conservation easements of approximately 6,000 acres (from James & Kathy Morrissey) to the Copperopolis Community Plan. He stated that having SNC's help to facilitate this effort would be appreciated.

Greg Meyer – Representative of James and Kathy Morrissey, the property owners, are committed to preserving the open space and would be factored into the long-term plan of public use of private land. It is suggested the Board arrange a tour to the property and speak with the property owners.

Kathy Kuse-Brazil – Representing the Amador Fire Safe Council, with a mission to protect the people of Amador County and is strictly a grant-run organization. She indicated interest in grant opportunities in the area, which has a high senior population and significant wildland-urban interface.

Patty Jacobson - Urged the Board to create a clear-cutting task force to address the issue in the Sierra. She indicated that clear-cutting impacts everyone and the SNC strategic plan does not address the issue. Ms. Jacobson brought informational packets for the Board and posted pictures from Google Earth of clear-cut areas.

Ward Levalli – Representing Community Action Project, "CAP," stated their mission is to promote community-based democracy and greater public participation in local government. Welcomed Board to the Motherlode and wished the Board success in the mission.

Susan Robinson - A resident of Arnold, stated that 1/3 of the forests in Calaveras County are set for clear-cutting and will have a dramatic impact on residents and tourism in the County. Ms. Robinson urges SNC to become involved in the issue.

Barry Bolton - A resident of Arnold, urged the Board to create a task force to address clear-cutting and decide what point the SNC can take in the issue. He stated that the Conservancy should have an interest in the Region as a whole, not just public land.

Dick McCleary - USDA Central Sierra Natural Resource Conservation and Development, consisting of Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Northern Mono, and

Alpine Counties, has been involved in over 12 million dollars' worth of projects that were completed in the past year.

John Buckley – Executive Director for Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, indicated a State of the Sierra status report is needed, as a guide to where opportunities exist.

Robert Meese – President of The Sierra Executive Institute, a group that brings executives from the Sierra Nevada to help stimulate regional economy in smaller regions. He commended the SNC for its outreach efforts but expressed concern over the lack of attention paid to individual businesses in the community to deal with the water, land and the watersheds.

Virginia Landreth – Resident of Railroad Flat, supports the Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) program. The objective is to have a positive impact on the land with healthy forest practices.

Jerry Scott – Oak Woodland Conservation Group, described the group's mission as working with all stakeholders and hopes to work with the SNC.

Susan Bragstad – Amador City Amador Land Trus, holds 3,000 acres in easements, agriculture, historical, and scenic values of the region. Farms of Amador are also trying to protect and promote local agriculture.

Don Wells – LTA. There has been unpredicted growth on the Calaveras side of Lake Tallas and the forecast is for 100,000 residents. Would like help on focusing the planning.

Katherine Evatt - Foothill Conservancy, identified a few community projects that are compatible with the goals of SNC, such as working landscapes, promotion of sustainable forests, protecting and restoring watersheds, dam removal, strengthening the economy and preserving historical resources. Ms. Evatt stated the Foothill Conservancy is in need of technical assistance for a project relating to the protection of the Mokulumne River and promoting local river tourism.

**VI. Chairman's Report** – Vice Chair Dahle *indicated that at this time the Board would proceed to the Executive Officer Report Agenda Item VII until Chairman Chrisman arrived.*

**VII. Executive Officer Report**

**a. Governor's Event**

Executive Officer Jim Branham indicated that on January 4, staff attended the Governor's "Green Dream" Pre-Inaugural Event. SNC was one of the few State Departments asked to participate. Branham thanked Placer Grown for providing

fresh fruit, Apple Hill Growers Association for the hot apple cider, and the SNC staff for pulling the event together.

b. **Staffing update**

The goal continues to be the hiring of all base budget staff members by the end of the current fiscal year. He indicated the SNC would once again revert funds that were not expended for staff this year.

c. **Budget update**

The Governor's proposed budget includes the same level of base funding that SNC has in the current year, with some adjustment for cost of living. The budget also includes \$17.5 million of Proposition 84 funds, \$17 million of which would be allocated as grants throughout the region. The SNC staff will be working through the legislative process to assure the funds remain in the Governor's budget.

Boardmember Brissenden questioned the reimbursement authority in the proposed budget. Branham indicated it is simply there in the event that the SNC receives funds through reimbursement; otherwise, the funds could not be expended.

Boardmember Sher questioned whether the \$17.5 million in the Governor's Budget is the amount that the Governor's Office proposed or did SNC consult with them? Branham stated SNC consulted with the Governor's Office and that the \$17.5 million is the amount recommended by the SNC.

Branham asked Boardmember Lloyd to comment on the State Budget process. Lloyd reported that the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) is reviewing the budget; a report will be released February 21. He indicated there will be an opportunity for revisions to the budget in April and once again in May. Following the May Revise, the Budget Conference Committee will be convened to address the difference between the Assembly and the Senate versions of the budget. Once those differences are resolved, the Budget will be sent to the Governor for approval.

Branham indicated he would hold meetings with legislative budget staff in the coming weeks.

d. **Area offices**

Branham indicated that SNC has signed an agreement for the Mariposa office, and arrangements are being made to secure necessary resources for the office. He indicated that Ken Jones and John Knott have been working with Federal Officials to secure the Bishop and Susanville office space. SNC staff has held initial conversations with Kern River Valley residents and will follow up with Supervisor McQuiston.

e. **Headquarters Office**

Branham recommended that the Board revisit the permanent headquarters search in September of this year. The current site is working well; however, the SNC is still receiving continued interest from surrounding communities.

Without objection from the Board, Branham indicated that staff would present a proposed process for securing a permanent headquarters at the September 2007 meeting.

f. **Proposed Annual Symposium**

Branham proposed that in conjunction with the September meeting, an annual symposium focused on climate change be held. He indicated that the potential impacts to Sierra Nevada snowpack and resulting effect on the state's water infrastructure could be significant. He indicated that the symposium provided an opportunity to understand the potential impacts, as well as addressing how the region could positively contribute and adapt. He also indicated that the event would serve to remind people around the state as to why the Sierra Nevada Region is so important. He commented there are a variety of governmental and non-governmental partners who were interested in assisting the SNC in this effort.

Boardmember Brissenden suggested looking at a "State of the Sierra" report at the symposium and have it become an annual event. Branham indicated that the plan was to have an annual event that would focus on a particular topic of importance to the Region.

Boardmember Sher stated that he thought the symposium and focus were a good idea and timely. He indicated that the symposium should also address the implementation of AB 32 (2006), relating to addressing greenhouse gas emissions.

Boardmember Kirkwood suggested it might be an opportunity for a foundation affiliated with the Conservancy to assist with the event, including publications, etc. Branham indicated that he agreed that is precisely what a foundation could do and stated that option would be pursued.

Branham indicated that the SNC staff will proceed with planning for the event and report back to the Board. He recommended that a committee of the Board be appointed to assist with planning the event. Boardmembers Brissenden and Kirwan volunteered to serve as the Board committee.

g. **Integrated Regional Watershed Management Planning (IRWMP) Workshop**

Branham stated that SNC is co-sponsoring the workshop with Sierra Nevada Alliance, the CABY (Cosumnes-American-Bear-Yuba) watershed group and the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association on March 9, 2007. He indicated that the SNC is prepared to assist Sierra groups interested in engaging in the IRWMP process. This meeting is open to the public.

h. **California Rangeland Coalition**

Branham indicated that he attended the second annual meeting of this group that is a coalition of ranchers, environmentalists and government agencies. The group's motto is "don't let the 5% that we disagree on get in the way of the 95% we do agree on." The group is sponsoring research, which will help inform a variety of discussions on key issues. He indicated that SNC staff would continue to stay involved with the group, as it is consistent with the SNC mission.

i. **Presentation by CSU Chico, Center for Economic Development (CED).**

Courtney Denehey and Gillian Murphy indicated that CED would like to donate copies of the annual economic reports for 11 counties within the Sierra Nevada Region to the SNC Library. A brief description was given of the services offered by the CED, their office locations, and examples of projects they have assisted in the region. Both expressed a desire to work with the SNC in the future to help develop economic opportunities in the Sierra Nevada Region.

j. **Saving the Sierra, Voices of Conservation in Action**

Jesikah Maria Ross and Catherine Stifter described their project, "Saving the Sierra, Voices of Conservation in Action," which is a public broadcasting project that includes a collection of conservation stories from around the Sierra. Information is distributed through radio, the website and presentations.

Chairman Chrisman asked how the topics and stories pursued are prioritized. Ms. Ross indicated that they listen to anyone who shares stories, and they rely on a range of "what's the news angle" to sell the ideas to the broadcast system. What are the stories you are going to tell about the Sierra? Groups like the Sierra Nevada Alliance and The Sierra Fund are on an advisory committee and help by weighing-in with ideas.

Boardmember Yamaguchi noted the gap between the rural and the urban communities and the importance of bridging the gap.

**VI. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Chrisman indicated Resources Agency entities had received approximately \$9.5 billion from bond initiatives, including \$500 million for the Wildlife Conservation Board. He indicated spending plans were being addressed in the legislative budget process and the Agency will continue to look for opportunities for coordination between various entities and programs.

**VIII. Attorney General's Report**

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul informed the Board that all members need to complete the ethics training that is available via the internet. The whole process takes approximately 1 hour 15 minutes. Boardmember Kirkwood asked if there was a deadline for when the training needed to be completed. Sproul indicated she would get back to Boardmembers on due date. She also indicated

that Conflict of Interest (COI) filings are due on April 2, 2007. She indicated that local officials would need to complete the state COI, as well as the local form.

**IX. South Central Sub-Region Report**

Boardmember Boitano introduced Tuolumne County Supervisor Paolo Maffei.

Supervisor Maffei stated that he works closely with the Central Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&DC), as well as the local Resource Conservation District. The RC&DC is planning an upcoming watershed meeting where issues including storm water run-off will be addressed. He also indicated that he is hoping the various groups can address "smart growth" in the Sierra. He believes this is important to assist local communities to go a step beyond the normal planning process and go to the smart growth code. He also indicated he hoped the SNC could be helpful in dealing with the Phoenix Lake issue.

Boardmember Boitano introduced Supervisor Steve Wilensky of Calaveras County, who indicated he would speak at tomorrow's field tour, so he would not address the Board today.

*Chairman Chrisman indicated that at this time the Board would proceed to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy License Plate agenda item XI.*

**XI. Sierra Nevada Conservancy License Plate**

Executive Officer Branham indicated that the SNC continues to explore the process with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and believes there is steady progress. He also stated that discussions with The Sierra Fund relating to the marketing campaign have also progressed.

He indicated that Boardmembers Yamaguchi and Sher had worked with staff to identify design concepts that would serve as a basis for further development.

Boardmember Sher stated that the challenge is to come up with something that motorists will relate with the Sierra Nevada. Boardmember Yamaguchi commented on the various designs being considered and suggested a "less busy" design.

Boardmember Whiteside asked when the more size-restrictive design came into play with Department of Motor Vehicles. Branham indicated that due to concerns of the California Highway Patrol, the statute now does not allow for full plate designs.

Boardmember Kirkwood asked how the logo competition was going to relate to the plate design, indicating there would be an advantage to having the two together. Branham replied that elements of the logo would be incorporated into the final plate design, hopefully by the May Board meeting.

Boardmember Haigh suggested that one of the images resembled the BLM logo. He suggested that the available space should be fully utilized and "dead space" be eliminated.

Izzy Martin of The Sierra Fund informed the Board that TSF has begun to explore corporate and foundation partners including banking institutions, forestry companies and other businesses. She stressed the importance of identifying the right messages to sell the plate. Yamaguchi expressed his appreciation for the efforts of The Sierra Fund to date

**Yamaguchi moved and Hunt seconded a motion to approve the staff recommendation that a final license plate design be provided to the Board at the May meeting. Boardmember Brissenden recused himself from the item.**

**X. Action Plan Update**

Program Manager Bob Kingman referred to the updated action plan matrix, showing progress on a number of items. He also indicated that the SNC continued progress on examinations and job advertisements.

Kingman introduced Robert Trent of Velocity 7, consultants to the SNC. Mr. Trent presented the Board on overview of the logo competition involving high school students from throughout the region.

**XII. Program and Grants Guidelines Development**

Executive Officer Branham indicated that the staff had drafted Program Guidelines that were as comprehensive as possible and consistent with the Strategic Plan. He also stated that Proposition 84 Grants Guidelines had been drafted and would be reviewed along with the Program Guidelines. He acknowledged the efforts of Bob Kingman, Dean Cromwell and Charlie Willard in drafting the guidelines.

Branham referred the Board to the timeline in the Board materials. He stated that the workshops to be held in March and April would provide the public the opportunity to provide comments on both sets of guidelines. He indicated that the SNC would hold 18 workshops in the region and 2 outside the region. He also indicated that each sub-region would have a Board committee of two, including the Supervisor from the Sub-region and a statewide member, to assist with the comments from the sub-region, as identified in the Board materials.

Boardmembers Ishida and Kirwan indicated that the schedule presented a conflict for them; staff agreed to work to resolve the conflict.

Bob Kingman stated these are overall program guidelines and the last page shows a Table of Contents for the separate set of guidelines that will be for Prop 84 grants.



Branham explained for the first year's pot of money, staff recommends that an allocation be made to each sub-region and provide some funds for projects of Regional significance. He urged the Board to remain flexible on the formula and to be prepared to make changes in future years if need be.

Boardmember Kirkwood suggested that the differences between competitive grants and the strategic opportunity grants be made clearer and suggested the order be changed.

Boardmember Whiteside stated it might be easier to understand if the formula for distribution is written with percentages vs. dollar amounts. Boardmember Lloyd recommended that the organization remain flexible in the allocation of funds. Boardmember Yamaguchi expressed the importance of equitable distribution throughout the Region.

Branham stated that the Program Guidelines will be for all funding opportunities and the Proposition 84 Grants Guidelines will be specific to Proposition 84 funds.

Boardmember Sher questioned language in the Proposition 84 Grants Guidelines, which restricts funding to certain areas, given an earlier memo from staff indicating funds could be used for any activity consistent with the SNC mission. Branham indicated that the language in the section allocating funds to the SNC is quite specific as to how those funds can be used; however, he agreed that language in the statute cited in the earlier memo is confusing. Staff Counsel John Gussman suggested that there is some confusion in Proposition 84, but that based on consultation with the Attorney General's Office, the Guidelines reflect the most defensible interpretation. Branham indicated that staff would continue to research issue, but his recommendation is to go forward with the interpretation contained in the guidelines.

Branham indicated that the SNC would look forward to comments on the grant size limitations. He also stated that the guidelines communicated the position that the SNC does not view itself as a land management organization.

Boardmember Kirkwood noted equitable distribution is affected by population and acreage served. Branham pointed out that the language in the statute does not include population as a factor, but it could be considered. He suggested seeing what the public comment was on this issue. Kirkwood also suggested the guidelines are explicit regarding SNC not wanting to own and manage land.

Boardmember Kirwan commented that the SNC should not award grants that compete with funding already in place addressing air and water quality.

Kirkwood pointed out areas where he believed the guidelines do not accurately reflect language in the Strategic Plan. Branham indicated it was not staff's intent to create inconsistencies with the Strategic Plan, and staff would review language in question.

Kirwan suggested a footnote that makes clear the Strategic Plan "trumps" language in the guidelines.

Kirkwood also pointed out that the project evaluation section does not address the context of surrounding land and provides no sense of the lasting value of the grants.

**XIII. *Bureau of Land Management Presentation, by Bill Haigh, will be tabled until the May meeting due to time constraints.***

**XIV. Recognition of Senator Tim Leslie**

Vice-chairman Brian Dahle recognized former State Senator and Assemblyman Tim Leslie. Dahle praised Senator Leslie for his leadership in creating the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. He presented him with a resolution from the Board.

Senator Leslie thanked the Board for the recognition and indicated that he had enjoyed watching the Board in action, working on the various issues addressed in the legislation. He pointed out the uniqueness of the SNC and particularly the strong role of county supervisors. He indicated that in his 20 years of legislative service, the legislation creating the SNC was his most "spectacular."

**XV. Board Member Comments**

Boardmember Ishida commented on how important it is to clarify during the outreach meetings that the Proposition 84 funds may not be available for all SNC program activities (due to language in the Proposition).

**XVI. Public Comment**

Richard Gresham - Placer County Resource Conservation District, requested an opportunity to make a formal presentation to the Board regarding RCDs and what they do. Gresham has had previous conversations with EO Branham and several Boardmembers and asks SNC to look at RCDs in the Region and see what type of partnerships could be created.

**XVII. Adjourn the Meeting**

Vice Chair Dahle adjourned the meeting at 5:08 PM.